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POST SECONDARY EDUCATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT  
SRI LANKA

Submitted to:  
Educational Development Council  
United States Agency for International Development  
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Submitted by:  
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# **POST SECONDARY EDUCATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR SRI LANKA**

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AED	Agricultural Education Development
AUC	Affiliated University Colleges
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HEAD	Higher Education And Development
MBA	Masters in Business Administration
MOEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
NAREP	Natural Resources and Environmental Project
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIC	Newly Industrializing Country
OIT	Office of International Training
TOT	Training of Trainers
UDLP	University Development Linkages Program
UGC	University Grants Commission
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## **Post Secondary Education Needs Assessment Report for Sri Lanka**

### **Executive Summary**

This Needs Assessment of Post Secondary Education in Sri Lanka was initiated by the HEAD project. It reflects the Agency's effort to determine the extent to which developing country institutions of higher education can assist USAID in the implementation of its strategic development goals, and contribute more effectively to national development goals and objectives.

The Report is divided into four chapters: Chapter 1 - *Terms of Reference* - outlines the historical development and context of the assessment activity and details the scope of work, methodology and reporting format. Chapter 2 - *Post Secondary Education in Sri Lanka* - provides a brief profile of the political, economic and social conditions of Sri Lanka, and a description of the role, structure, strengths and constraints on the system of higher education. An attempt is made to determine which factors inhibit the ability of the post secondary education system to contribute to sustainable national development. Chapter 3 - *USAID and Higher Education in Sri Lanka* - examines USAID/Sri Lanka's development objectives, outlines the historical involvement of the Mission in post secondary education, and identifies areas of opportunity for capacity building assistance. Finally, Chapter 4 - *Summary and Recommendations* - provides a summation of findings and a list of suggested bi-lateral and collaborative development activities which are consistent with the Mission's vision of assisting Sri Lanka to become a democratic, environmentally sound, newly industrializing country (NIC).

Sri Lanka is evolving a hybrid system of education with aspects of both the British and American systems and traditions. The state has established a diversified and comprehensive post secondary educational system which provides basic, advanced, technical, vocational, professional, and continuing education for the school age population. However, there are serious concerns about the relevance of the curriculum to national development priorities. Most graduates are prepared for government jobs in teaching, health, or parastatals. The current structure appears to be dysfunctional and ill-equipped to facilitate and promote macroeconomic market transition. Significant shifts must be made in university education if it is to meet national demands for industry oriented graduates.

Higher education in Sri Lanka is so highly politicized that it is very difficult to address systemic problems. Students, faculty and administrators are active participants in political parties, and they do not always separate party politics from the academic enterprise. The process of selecting university leaders, hiring and firing faculty, and educational policy, especially policy with respect to private universities, and new academic programs, are political rather than academic decisions. Universities are frequently closed, and both student work

and the quality of instruction have declined. What is needed is a delinking of the political parties from post secondary institutions.

This need is clearly understood by educators and political leaders alike, however, the situation tends not to be viewed from the perspective of long term national (and personal) interests. Rather, the perspective is clouded by short-term vested interests. Perhaps because they themselves are products of the system, parties required to make the decisions for change have been unable and/or unwilling to bridge the gap between the identification of the problem and implementation of solutions.

While the constraints are numerous, it is important to point out that there are strengths in the system. For example, policies and procedures are in place to address questions of equity with respect to gender, rural, and disadvantaged populations. Affiliated University Colleges have been established to meet the demand for geographical equity and to provide vocational courses. An Open University has been established to address some of the non-traditional demands of the post secondary population, and outreach activities, agricultural extension, and continuing education programs have been established to address the educational needs of the adult, employed population, including professional workers and school leavers. In addition, a number of linkages have been established between post secondary institutions in Sri Lanka and institutions of higher education in other countries (Purdue, Berkeley, Calcutta, Oslo, Reading, Dhaka, Upsala, etc.). These linkages expose faculty and students to external methods, knowledge and experiences which contribute not only to faculty development, but mediate against scientific and social isolation.

In recent months, private universities have opened their doors to students in Sri Lanka. They are not permitted to award degrees, but through affiliations with external universities like Eastern Connecticut State, and the University of Houston, they are providing alternatives to students who are either unable or unwilling to attend public universities.

It is important to note that the government is committed to enhancing and expanding educational quality and services, and is interested in developing a system of higher education which is responsive to socio-economic demands. It will need help to do this. USAID/Sri Lanka can function as a conduit for interventions which complement the efforts of progressive segments of the higher education community and encourage the development of an educational framework that is comprehensive and responsive to the social and economic needs of the nation.

Education is not among the Mission's strategic objectives. In fact, the 1978 Project Grant Agreement for Agricultural Education Development (AED) is the only "education" project funded by the Mission in the past 15 years. The bulk of educational expenditures have been devoted to agricultural studies, and there

has been a decided gender imbalance in that area. Over 75% of the participants receiving USAID support were male. This might be reflective of a male dominated agricultural research/education sector, but given the predominance of women in agricultural production in Sri Lanka, it is surprising to see so few women being trained for professional positions in the sector.

Within the context of USAID/Sri Lanka's program objectives - (1) a sound investment climate and business performance; (2) diversification and commercialization of agricultural systems; (3) conservation and shared control of environmental and natural resources; and (4) citizen participation in democratic systems - support for new forms of cooperation between the private and public sectors, rural and urban communities, in-school and adult populations, and linkages between U.S. institutions and universities in Sri Lanka would contribute to the realization of the Mission's vision of Sri Lanka as a democratic, environmentally sound newly industrializing country (NIC).

Given the climate in Sri Lanka and the Mission's strategic objectives, concentration on the following activities is recommended. The recommendations are prioritized under each strategic objective.

### **Economic Growth**

\*1. Good administrative, and financial management skills would increase the capacity of the university to better manage its decreasing budgetary allocations. A program to train university officials to address the issues of cost recovery and institutional development would be extremely useful. Faculty exchanges where experts in institutional development come to Sri Lanka for 1-2 years and Sri Lankan officials spend 3-5 months working in institutional development offices at an American universities might be the most effective way to introduce these skills to post secondary institutions in Sri Lanka.

2. There is an acute shortage of qualified middle level managers. A management training program would provide the skills needed for a growing private sector and for policy makers and bureaucrats faced with management of a public sector beset by budgetary and political problems.

3. University programs in agri-business would enhance commercial agriculture and support rural growth. They would also build upon past USAID investments in agriculture, such as extensive support provided to the Post Graduate Institute for Agriculture through the AED project.

4. The establishment of linkages with U.S. universities is an effective way to provide needed exposure of post secondary faculties to trends and ideas in the international community. These linkages should focus simultaneously on exchanges for capacity building and exposure to alternative approaches to the educational enterprise.

5 Increased economic growth and efficiency could result from a bridge project between industry and the university which would enable students to participate in internships and practicums in the private sector.

6. A private business school, funded by the private sector, is being set up by the Chamber of Commerce to provide an Executive MBA program for new graduates and employed professionals in the business sector. Support through retired U.S. executives and linkage programs with American institutions would go a long way towards producing the level of skills needed to make these programs successful.

7. A Curriculum Task Force composed of educators, government officials, private sector representatives and parents should be supported as a vehicle for creating a revised curriculum reflective of the contemporary role of education in national development. The Task Force would address critical questions of language and economic development, extending or modifying the period of higher education training to address practical and curriculum deficiencies, democratization of education, and educational expenditures, enrollment quotas, among others.

8. Academics, policy makers and the private sector would benefit from the promotion of a series of educational policy dialogues that are informed by serious research undertaken and disseminated by a local policy center.

9. Economic growth could result from strengthening continuing education programs for the professional and adults communities in Affiliated University Colleges. Correspondence courses, evening classes, extra-mural classes in rural areas, distance learning, workshops, and seminars are examples of programs which should be supported.

### **Environment and Natural Resource Management**

\*1. Universities are in the initial stages of developing interdisciplinary environmental studies programs, but they need assistance in training faculties to teach environmental courses. A Training of Trainers (TOT) project for university lecturers, in collaboration with NAREP, would enable them to develop the capacity to promote and sustain these fledging environmental initiatives.

2. As farmers, water bearers, wood gatherers, and caretakers of the home and compound, rural women need technical knowledge of the natural resources (soil, water, forests, etc.) that they interact with on a daily basis. Distance learning and/or community-based awareness projects would enable rural women to make informed decisions about using and protecting the environment. This would have a multiplier effect in the home and in the village.

3. Faculty exchanges to help build curricula for environmental studies, and short term faculty training (TOT) in environment management would increase Sri Lanka's institutional capacity to manage natural resources.
4. There is interest in and benefits to be derived from sponsoring a series of seminars across the country on the relevance of environmental awareness to health and economic development.

### **Democracy and Governance**

- \*1. According to one interviewee, derision and overpowering are the only available ways to resolve conflict in Sri Lankan culture. There is a clear opportunity to support mechanisms for conflict resolution. School counseling might be the least objectionable and the most cost effective way to promote the art of compromise that is vital to democratic governance. Linkages with U.S. institutions which have experience in conflict resolution and democratization could foster both strategies and build Sri Lankan institutional capacity for conflict resolution.
2. There is a vital need to review and revise educational policies and practices, including policies on private institutions. According to the World Bank, the aim of quality improvement is clear, but issues of affordability, revenue generation, and private sector involvement as possible means to this end are controversial and political. Support for comparative research on policies and practices in neighboring countries and in the U.S. would help shape a policy debate on the issues.
3. Continuing education is an effective way to forge links with community organizations and professional associations (bar associations, chartered accountants, etc.). Evening classes structured in a manner to encourage ongoing linkages and dialogue between the educational community, civil society and the private sector would contribute to democratization.
4. Dialogue on education, democracy and privatization should be promoted. Affiliated universities might become useful sites for promoting public debate.
5. There is continuing need for mediation between university and industry. Research institutes are well placed to bridge the gap and play the role of mediator. Programs which assist them in providing internships, training and practicums will bring the university closer to the productive sector and would demonstrate the importance of corporate participation in the democratic process as contribute to economic growth.
6. There are approximately 9,000 NGOs in Sri Lanka. Activities which bring the expertise of the university, community to NGOs and promote meaningful collaboration between the entities would benefit both, and the nation.

## **Post Secondary Education Needs Assessment USAID/SRI LANKA**

### **Chapter 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **1.0. Rationale for the Assessment**

Beginning in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the United States Government set out to enhance the capacity of American institutions to produce competitive students capable of contributing to the nation's foreign policy goal of transforming the political economies of developing countries. Pursuant to its development priorities, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) provided funding for capacity building programs for selected institutions. The Department of Education, through its area studies programs; the United States Information Agency, through its Fulbright programs; the Department of Agriculture, through its joint venture programs; and other departments and agencies contributed to the process of capacity building in American colleges and universities. As a result of these investments, a number of scholars specialized in area studies and became valuable resources, assisting the Agency in analyzing, assessing, forecasting and designing development programs, and setting priorities to facilitate the process of change in the developing world. Many of these scholars now work for USAID, international donor agencies and NGOs, and are making significant contributions to development. But, their numbers are small.

Despite the merits of these early capacity building efforts, by the early 80s policy makers began to realize that American institutions were not keeping pace with the global marketplace, were not meeting the needs of American society, and were ill prepared to respond to the demands of developing countries. USAID concluded that additional capacity building was needed to enable these institutions to contribute to the development priorities and strategic objectives of the Agency.

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The University Center (Agency Center for University Cooperation in Development) was established in 1990 to increase the capacity of universities in developing countries to contribute to national development, while simultaneously assisting American colleges and universities to transform themselves into global institutions. The establishment of the University Development Linkages Program (UDLP) in 1991 - a university-to-university program - was a creative and viable approach to capacity building at home and abroad. However, a more comprehensive approach to capacity building was initiated in 1992-93 under the rubric of the Higher Education And Development (HEAD) project. It was under the auspices of the HEAD Planning Project that the University Center developed its strategy for assessing the capacity of developing country institutions of higher education to contribute to USAID's development priorities while advancing national development efforts in their own countries.

Given this historical framework, it seems logical to assume that if American institutions of higher education, with their access to technology, grants, and new ideas, require capacity building, there is a corresponding need among institutions in developing countries for capacity building assistance. The demands being made on these institutions, amidst increasing enrollments and decreased budgetary allocations, are quite significant. In most instances, institutions of higher education in developing countries are expected to provide their societies with the skills, research, and human resources needed for national development. Most do not have the capacity to respond to these demands. It is therefore extremely important to identify ways of enhancing their capacity, ways which are sustainable and which serve to stem the current pattern of economic decline and political unrest which constrain national development.

This Needs Assessment of Post Secondary Education in Sri Lanka reflects the Agency's effort to determine the extent to which developing country institutions of higher education can assist USAID in the implementation of its strategic development goals, and contribute more effectively to national development goals and objectives.

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## 2.0. Scope of Work

### 2.1. General Mandate

The **goals** of the assessment are two-fold: one, to determine how post secondary institutions can best contribute to USAID and national development priorities; and two, to identify the most promising opportunities for cost effective, development-oriented collaboration between post secondary institutions in Sri Lanka, U.S. institutions, and USAID.

The **objectives** of the assessment are:

- (a) to determine factors limiting the capacity of Sri Lanka's post secondary institutions to contribute to a sustainable development process;
- (b) to analyze relationships between these institutions and other institutions as well as private and public NGOs involved in Mission priority areas;
- (c) to identify cost effective ways that these institutions can support the Mission in the realization of its development objectives;
- (d) to propose sources of expertise and training not immediately available to the Mission and which can facilitate inexpensive interventions;
- (e) to identify and describe linkages established (including electronic linkages) with other post secondary institutions that can be improved on a cost-effectiveness basis; and
- (f) to identify formal and informal mechanisms which will allow Sri Lankan institutions to better meet national development needs.

## **2.2. Country Specific Mandate**

This assessment seeks to identify those factors which enhance and those which inhibit the transformation of the higher education system in Sri Lanka. It also seeks to determine cost effective ways of strengthening the capacity of these institutions to address national development needs and priorities, within the context of USAID/Sri Lanka's strategic objectives.

## **3.0. Composition of the Assessment Team**

The Assessment Team consisted of Valerie Smith, Ph.D., Visiting University Scientists, USAID/Washington, and Shelby Lewis, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Internationalization, Clark Atlanta University. Shelby Lewis served as Team Leader.

## **4.0. Methodology**

Prior to the site visit, the Assessment Team reviewed background materials on Sri Lanka, its political and economic systems, and its educational system. The team also reviewed reports on donor activity in Sri Lanka. In addition, H.E. Anande, Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the United States, Minister Tilak Ranaviraj, and Toby Pierce, the Sri Lanka Desk Officer, briefed the USAID/Washington Planner, Lark Carter, and Team member, Valerie Smith on conditions and priorities in the country.

Upon reaching Colombo, the Mission Liaison, Randell Casey, provided the Team with a portfolio of documents on higher education in Sri Lanka, including newspaper clippings, post reports, and university and institute reports. In addition, the Mission Director and key staff briefed the Team and gave each member a copy of "Post Secondary Education in Sri Lanka: Notes on Visits with Local Resource Persons," a one page summary of the findings of a preliminary visit by the Mission Liaison and his staff to key post secondary education institutions in the country. The Notes and the briefing served to guide the work

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of the Team. (See Attachment 1) Additional insights resulted from a debriefing session with the Mission Director and six (6) members of his staff.

The primary data for the assessment were generated by on-site interviews with a wide variety of officials from post secondary institutions, the Ministry of Higher Education, donor agencies, NGOs, and USAID staff. An interview schedule (see Attachment 2) and a list of individuals, agencies and institutions interviewed (see Attachment 3) are appended to this Report.

The Report is a summary and analysis of the information obtained through briefings, readings, site visits, interviews and informal discussions. The Assessment Team is solely responsible for conclusions drawn, recommendations offered, and any errors found in the report.

## **5.0. Organization of the Report**

This Post Secondary Education Needs Assessment Report is divided into four chapters: Chapter 1 - *Terms of Reference* - outlines the historical development and context of the assessment activity and details the scope of work, methodology and reporting format. Chapter 2 - *Post Secondary Education in Sri Lanka* - provides a brief profile of the political, economic and social conditions of Sri Lanka, and a description of the role, structure, strengths and constraints on the system of higher education. An attempt is made to determine which factors inhibit the ability of the post secondary education system to contribute to sustainable national development. Chapter 3 - *USAID and Higher Education in Sri Lanka* - examines USAID/Sri Lanka's development objectives, outlines the historical involvement of the Mission in post secondary education, and identifies areas of opportunity for capacity building assistance. Finally, Chapter 4 - *Summary and Recommendations* - provides a summation of findings and a list of suggested bi-lateral and collaborative development activities which are consistent with the Mission's vision of assisting Sri Lanka to become a democratic, environmentally sound, newly industrializing country (NIC).

## Chapter 2. POST SECONDARY EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA

### 1.0. Historical and Economic Context

Sri Lanka is a small island Republic located in the Indian Ocean. The country occupies a geographical area of 25,332 square miles and has a population of 18 million inhabitants who are both multi-racial and multi-religious. The social indicators for the country approximate those of industrializing nations. Population growth rate is quite low (1.1%), the crude birth rate is 19.0 per 1000, life expectancy is 71.6 years, infant mortality is 17.5 per 1,000 live births, nearly half what it was in 1980, and the labor force participation rate for women is 20%.

The Sinhalese, the earliest known inhabitants of the island, settled in Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) in the 6th Century B.C. They constitute a majority (74%) of the population and are nearly all Buddhist. The Tamils, an important minority, came to the country centuries ago from the southern regions of India. They comprise 18% of the population and are predominately Hindu. The Moors and other minorities comprise 8% of the population. The majority of Sri Lankans (69.3) are Buddhist, 15.5% are Hindus, 7.6% are Muslims and 7.5% are Christians. The official languages are Sinhala and Tamil, though English is the language of commerce in the country.

Because of its location, Sri Lanka fell prey to numerous invasions from China and India before the Portuguese invaded the island in the 15th Century. The Portuguese settlers were supplanted by the Dutch in 1640, and the British took over in 1796. Sri Lanka became a British Crown Colony in 1815. Self-government and universal franchise were granted in 1931. In 1948 Sri Lanka (Ceylon) gained full independence. The name of the country was changed from Ceylon to Sri Lanka in 1972 and in 1978 a new constitution was drafted and the country became the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Politically, Sri Lanka has a presidential form of government which was adopted in 1977, and later confirmed by the constitution of 1978. The constitution provides

sovereignty exercised through referenda and a unicameral parliament of elected representatives. The president is not accountable to the parliament. He may dismiss parliament at will and may only be removed from office by a two-thirds vote of the parliament and the concurrence of the Supreme Court. The prime minister, who is the leader of the ruling party in parliament, is appointed by the president.

Since independence, the largest threat to internal security in Sri Lanka has been an ongoing dispute between the Tamil minority and the Sinhalese majority. The Tamils maintain that barriers have been erected to limit their access to power and services in the country and are attempting to establish an independent state in the area where they are the majority, particularly in the area of the Jaffna peninsula, to protect their interests. A no-separation law passed in 1983 makes any division of Sri Lanka illegal and places severe restrictions on anyone who advocates separatism. Though negotiations continue, no peaceful resolution of the dispute has been found. Armed conflict and ethnic tension are constants on the political scene.

While the nation has made significant economic progress in the past decades and is being projected as a newly industrializing country (NIC) by many observers, Sri Lanka's economy remains heavily dependent upon agriculture. The primary sector (agriculture, forestry, fisheries and mining) accounts for nearly 30% of the GDP and provides nearly 50% of total employment. Manufacturing accounts for 15% and construction and services account for 55% of the GDP. (Indraratna). Principal products are tea, rubber, coconuts and rice.

The country is largely self-sufficient in the production of its staple crop, rice, however, there is grave concern about the dependency on fluctuating commodities prices. Because of its vulnerability, the government is attempting to diversify the economy. In fact, during the 80s the government made a national shift towards an open market and an industrially based economy. As a result of that shift, Sri Lanka's industrial production increased to 50 per cent of total exports in the decade of the 80s. However, despite this growth, industry in the country is low technology and narrowly based, in part because universities and

research institutes are not producing graduates with the technological, managerial and entrepreneurial skills needed for economic "take off."

## **2.0. Sri Lanka's Post Secondary Education System**

In Sri Lanka, a hybrid system of education is evolving with aspects of both the British and American systems and traditions. The state has established a diversified and comprehensive post secondary educational system which provides basic, advanced, technical, vocational, professional, and continuing education for the school age population.

Education in Sri Lanka is free, universal and compulsory for 10 years. This has been the case since 1945 when the Board of Ministries, in the pre-independence period of self-government, resolved on free education to improve access and human resource development. The rigorous implementation of this resolution led to tremendous expansion of basic education in rural areas. As a result, participation in pre-collegiate education in Sri Lanka is very high. At least 93% of the school age population attends primary school and the literacy rate is 88%, one of the highest in Asia. There is also a relative lack of gender disparity in educational opportunity at the primary and secondary levels. Instruction is in Sinhala or Tamil, depending on the region, and English is compulsory from the third grade to university level. (Defense & Diplomacy).

Students who enter post secondary institutions in Sri Lanka have completed 13 years of pre-collegiate schooling: 6 years of primary, 5 years of middle school, and two years of higher (A-level) secondary education. These students attend three types of pre-collegiate schools: state controlled schools, denominational schools, and Pirivenas (for Buddhist clergy and lay students). Approximately 170,000 of the students sit for A-level exams each year, 30,000 pass and 25,000 qualify for university education. Only 12,000 of these students can be absorbed into state controlled universities. This leaves 13,000 students who are unable to obtain admission to a public university, resulting in a problem of high demand for places, without sufficient capacity in the system to meet the demand. (University Grants Commission)

Because of limited access, and thus, limited participation in higher education, university students in Sri Lanka are part of an elite group comprising 2.5% of the school age population. Statistics indicate that participation in higher education in Sri Lanka is lower than in most neighboring states. The access problem is exacerbated by the closure of universities in 1987-89. This created a session lag and has resulted in very competitive entry requirements as a means of managing the demand for places in the university system.

In addition to efforts to manage enrollment, Sri Lanka has also sought to expand the post secondary education sector in four ways: (a) creating new universities, (b) expanding existing universities, (3) expanding technical colleges and (d) creating affiliate universities colleges. As a result of the expansion, approximately 55,000 students attend public universities or affiliated university colleges, which offer a wide range of 4-year undergraduate and post graduate programs.

Structurally, the system of higher education consists of both public and private universities, research institutes, post graduate institutes, and technical, vocational and training colleges. These institutions come under a variety of ministries, but under the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) there are nine (9) fully supported public universities, including the Open University which offers non-traditional classes and charges fees. The Buddhist University which is under another Ministry brings the total number of universities in Sri Lanka to ten (10).

Nine (9) specialist institutes are attached to the universities, 5 at the post graduate level and 4 at the undergraduate level. Since 1991, nine of 24 projected regionally based Affiliated University Colleges (AUCs) have been established. These AUCs provide 2-year vocationally oriented courses. They are also part of an effort to meet the demand for geographical equity. Despite their critical role in the policy shift towards producing graduates equipped to meet national economic demands, AUCs are not autonomous. They are responsible to the

general university, which is expected to monitor their academic programs and operations.

The AUCs are too new for accurate programmatic evaluation, but preliminary research suggests that due in part to insufficient planning and funding limitations, the resource base of the AUCs is too fragile to meet current academic and development expectations. They need to develop new courses, methods, policies and strategies related to economic need and employability. (World Bank Report).

Students who are unable to gain entry into public universities have the option of seeking external degrees from Sri Lankan universities or from foreign universities. They may take certificate and diploma courses from private sector institutions, but these institutions are legally denied the right to issue degrees.

Post secondary technical and training institutions that do not come under the Private University Act are labeled tertiary institutions in Sri Lanka. They include 26 technical colleges and 4 affiliated technical units which enroll approximately 20,000 students. Under the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture are three formal training institutions: the Technician Training Institute, Apprentice Training Institute, and the Automobile Engineering Training Institute. They offer 4-year, 2-year and 1- year courses and provide apprenticeship training in industry as part of their programs. Approximately 2,150 students are enrolled in the institutes.

The gender-balance that characterizes access to and participation in basic education and, to a lesser extent, universities, does not exist in the area of technical training. Instead, female students are tracked into traditional female programs. This leads to both skills and employment disparity. And, while more girls than boys pass A-Level exams and more women than men are functionally literate, the jobs that women hold in the workplace are predominantly unskilled. (World Bank Report). When added to the tendency of females to study arts courses and to opt for careers in teaching, this disparity in technical training

programs contributes to higher unemployment rates for female graduates than for male graduates in Sri Lanka.

Compared with many countries in the region, Sri Lanka spends rather small proportions of its GDP (0.3 per cent) on higher education. For example, the unit recurrent cost (percent of per capita GDP) on higher education is 244.6 in Bangladesh, 243.3 in China, and 249.0 in Nepal. It is only 85.0 in Sri Lanka. (World Bank Report) Budget allocations for education, training, research, and allied services in Sri Lanka are made to more than thirty ministries and departments, including the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MOEHE) and its subsidiary, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). These allocations cover the funding of specialized teaching and training centers and research units outside the universities. Approximately 2.5 percent of GNP or 10.5 percent of current government expenditure is for education through the MOEHE and MOHE. Of this total, about 12 per cent is for higher education. When all sources are combined, about 9 percent of spending on education is for the higher education. (World Bank Report). At the moment, salaries account for more than 70 percent of expenditures. Some of the salaried teachers are untrained and their placement is uneven. For example, there are a number of cases where too many teachers are assigned to one district while too few are assigned to others. This disparity is not simply a question of geographical equity, it touches on the significance of political factors in educational decision-making.

Because of the rising demand for university education, rapid expansion is taking place in university enrollment. It would appear that this expansion is occurring in the absence of a thorough analysis of cost and financing implications. Since the age group in primary schools is decreasing, due consideration should be given to the reallocation of funds.

On the whole, university education in Sri Lanka meets normal quality standards, but there are serious concerns about the relevance of the curriculum. Since the system was originally designed to produce civil servants for the public sector, it is arts oriented. Most university graduates are prepared for government jobs in

teaching, health, or parastatals. Clearly, significant shifts must be made in the curriculum, and in the orientation of university education if it is to meet national demands for industry oriented graduates.

Traditionally, universities in Sri Lanka have been largely autocratic, resistant to change, and unaccountable to the Ministry and to the nation. The University Grants Commission (UGC) is the entity that has the best chance of getting them to look seriously at their structure, curricula, administrative and financial management, and general orientation to their role in producing graduates that are employable and qualified to meet the demands of the national economy. The UGC could play a key role in coordinating plans, programs, and funding for universities, but it has not yet adopted a formal quality control system.

While acknowledging the need for reform, the UGC focuses attention on problems of equity, finances, curriculum relevance and expansion. It suggests that significant progress is being made in all of these areas. A summary of the positive trends (strengths) highlighted by the UGC follows:

- (a) A growing appreciation for education among the citizenry;
- (b) Increased participation in higher education;
- (c) Expansion of the university system in the form of AUCs and additional programs;
- (d) Growing awareness among policy makers of the need to link the curriculum to national development;
- (e) Interest in distance learning and telecommunications;
- (f) Interest in adult learners, out of school learners, and linking the university to the community;
- (g) Enhancement and growth in international contacts and collaboration, including decades-old linkages with universities in England, Australia, India and others, and new linkages with American universities; and
- (h) Increased interest in the expansion and improvement of educational policy planning and dialogue.

### 3.0. Constraints on Post Secondary Education in Sri Lanka

Higher education in Sri Lanka is highly politicized. This creates a climate of distrust and anxiety, and polarizes ethnic groups, classes, and political parties. This climate makes it difficult to address the structural, curriculum, class, regional, budgetary and quality problems in the system.

There is tension between the need to democratize the university to meet economic requirements and traditional elitist social and educational values. Analysts agree that the structure, philosophy and curriculum of the (public) universities are no longer relevant to national development priorities. However, the responsibility and accountability of post secondary institutions to the wider community and to national development is still unclear. Moreover, there is no serious policy dialogue about integrated national, regional and sectoral planning, and programs for educational change.

In fact, the existing educational structure is often characterized as dysfunctional and ill-equipped to facilitate and promote the macroeconomic market transition resulting from recent rationalization of the government sector. (Notes) There is a general feeling that the system of higher education neither prepares students for making significant contributions to national development, or for employment or employability.

The Chamber of Commerce notes that many employers in industry feel that university and secondary school graduates have poor communication skills, inadequate knowledge, inadequate industry-based skills, and an uncooperative attitude towards work in the private sector. The communications problem is compounded by lack of fluency in English. This is immensely important in the private sector where English is the language of commerce in Sri Lanka.

Major political constraints prevent the system from addressing the question of English as a medium of instruction at the undergraduate level. But given the economic realities of Sri Lanka, there is concern about the breadth of vision of

both government and university officials. Evidence suggests that there is an absence of well researched data on approaches and successes in educational transformation in other Asian states. This type of comparative data might be instructive for educational policy-makers in Sri Lanka.

Undergraduate students in Sri Lanka are described as rural, arts majors with very provincial views, set expectations for employment in the public sector, uninformed or negative attitudes about the private sector, poor general communication skills, and a lack of familiarity and/or comfort with English. S/he is not aware of current changes in government, the economy, or the world.

This focus on rural graduates suggests that there is a glaring rural/urban dichotomy as regards the quality of preparation at the pre-collegiate level. The quota system that was instituted at the provincial level was meant to even out admission to universities across the country, but it does not address the problem of uneven quality of secondary training in the regions. Neither does it address the problem of inequity in the preparation of rural females, who are viewed by the Chamber as the most deficient of university graduates.

Clearly, there is difficulty in finding the balance between equity and efficiency. The overriding priorities of students are enrollment, good quality of life, and employment opportunities. As one interviewee pointed out, "they can't go back to the village after a degree. They need jobs that will make them feel that the system did not let them down badly. The rising expectations of these students are a recipe for social unrest." (G.L. Pieris)

It is reasonable to expect university graduates to be employable, i.e., academically and attitudinally competitive candidates for employment. Unfortunately, however, due in part to the limitations of the typical student and the problem of curriculum relevance, private sector employers rarely offer employment university graduates. Instead, they have consistently opted to train primarily urban secondary school graduates who are perceived to have greater potential as employees than university graduates. According to some employers in the private sector, no real attempt is being made by the university to address

this problem. Worse still, it is widely believed that the university nurtures unsupportive attitudes towards the private sector.

The Secretary-General of the Chamber notes that the private sector is equally to blame for the dissonance between university preparation and industry needs. The private sector has not provided career development opportunities for students, and has not approached the university community with ideas for curriculum reform. The major effort to address the problem of personnel mismatch is the recent Chamber initiative aimed at designing and raising funds to set up a private sector funded, administered, and oriented Executive MBA program focusing on information technology and catering to new graduates and employed professionals in the business sector. This new program is expected to address one of the biggest and most urgent problems in industry, the acute shortage of qualified management personnel at the middle level. The brain drain of the 1980s effectively removed the layer of young graduates who would have moved up to middle management in the 1990s. The Executive MBA will train new managers and provide in-service enhancement training for employed business professionals.

This private sector initiative is obviously needed in Sri Lanka, but it should not be viewed as a substitute for business and management studies in the national educational system. Clearly, the need to link the curriculum to knowledge and employment skills is an issue that must be addressed forthrightly. If in fact the government of Sri Lanka sees industry and the private sector as the engine of economic growth, the rejection of university graduates by industry is a very serious matter, and the need for curriculum reform to produce employable graduates is critical. This is true because the current system not only leads to high unemployment rate for university graduates, it also leads to personnel shortages and inefficiency in industry.

Current legislation governing private schools does not encourage public or industry support. One private university, the Institute for Technological Studies was established in 1983. Through an arrangement with the University of Houston, this university has trained 2,100 students who are all employed. This

has rekindled the issue of class in Sri Lanka since only selected students can afford to pay private university fees. Moreover, there is a perception of private education as a way of fostering class and regional interests. The question of quality and standards also enters the debate, and students who get selected to public universities on merit resent admission to private universities of people who do not place well at "O" level. The subtle, but unmistakable question of preserving "tradition" colors the debate. As is the case in a variety of communities elsewhere in the world, there is considerable resistance to educational change among politicians and post secondary academics. However, informed educators suggest that the need to update curricula and revise policies and attitudes towards non-government (private) schools is pressing.

Apparently, no scientific study has been made of the advantages and disadvantages, and the consequences of expanding the mandate and rights of private universities. The direction of the debate presents a major obstacle to the commissioning of such a study and to the ability of Sri Lanka to make the kind of bold moves necessary to meet the human resource demands of the nation. In the meantime, qualified educators are being lost to industry, foreign nations, politics, and/or dysfunctional bottlenecks in post secondary institutions, i.e., there is a brain drain in Sri Lanka.

Funding is a major factor in the ability of educational institutions to develop creative and appropriate approaches to human resource development. Unsustainable patterns of educational expenditures have resulted from inadequate enrollment management and the absence of a long term cost recovery system. In addition, insufficient funding for libraries, scientific equipment, maintenance and faculty development has led to decreased program quality and reductions in the quality of research undertaken by faculty at the university and in research institutes. For the most part, educational research in Sri Lanka is undertaken at universities, research centers, and at national research and development centers. Outside of the higher education sector, however, there are research-based institutes under the Ministries of Industries, Agriculture, and Technology. But there is no post graduate institute of science. Indications are, however, that the establishment of one is given high priority by the UGC.

Regardless of the emphasis one elects to place on the education of traditional in-school students, it is important in states with shifting priorities to focus some attention on continuing education as a means of providing in-service training for professionals and extra-mural programs for the general community. Universities should work with professional associations and NGOs like the bar association, and women's clubs to develop evening classes for their members. This is one way of promoting university accountability and responsibility to the wider community. Efforts should be made to make these links transparent lest the university remain an ivory tower unreachable by and unresponsive to the needs of the population it was designed to serve. Recently, the government set up school development Boards to integrate pre-collegiate schools into the community. These Boards might become models for post secondary institutions.

#### **4.0. Strengths of the Post Secondary Education Sector**

While the constraints are numerous, there are strengths in the system. For example, policies and procedures are in place to address questions of equity with respect to gender, rural, and disadvantaged populations. Affiliated University Colleges have been established to meet the demand for geographical equity and to provide vocational courses to address economic demand. As previously mentioned, a quota system has been set up at the provincial level to even out university admission across the country. An Open University has been established to address some of the non-traditional demands of the post secondary population. Post graduate research and teaching institutes, private and public have been established to meet educational and economic need. In addition, outreach activities, agricultural extension, and continuing education programs have been established to address the educational needs of the adult, employed population, including highly professional workers and school leavers.

A strong enabling scientific and technological environment appears to be evolving in Sri Lanka, especially in the areas of agricultural, medicine, and computer technology. This environment could be used to encourage and support educational reform. Moreover, there is in Sri Lanka a growing

awareness and an expanding debate about curriculum relevance and the responsibility of post secondary institutions to national development. Educators and policy makers alike are exploring options for transforming the system. Articles in the media and discussions with individuals point to increasing communication between the universities and the government, and between universities and research institutes in selected disciplines, particularly agriculture and environmental studies.

Another strength of the system is the number of linkages that have been established between post secondary institutions in Sri Lanka and institutions of higher education in other countries. These linkages expose faculties and students to external methods, knowledge and experiences which contribute not only to faculty development, but mediate against scientific and social isolation. There are linkages with Purdue University in mathematics; Calcutta University in the social sciences; University of California at Berkeley in law; Oslo University in medical ethics, physics, nuclear science and bio-chemistry; Reading University in statistics and computer science; University of Dhaka in social science; and there is a sandwich program for the Ph.D. degree with the University of Upsaala. These linkages are not new, and the University Grants Commission notes that they are but the tip of the iceberg. Efforts are underway to establish additional linkages with institutions in Australia, the U.S., Canada, England and with institutions in countries in the region, such as India and Pakistan.

In recent months, private universities like the University/Institute for Technological Studies, have opened their doors to students in Sri Lanka. They offer courses not traditionally included in the curriculum of public universities, and many of them use the American model for their academic programs. It is ironic that these institutions are not permitted to award degrees to students, but degrees can be awarded by foreign universities. Through affiliations and articulation agreements with American universities, including the Oklahoma State University, Eastern Connecticut State, and the University of Houston, alternatives routes to university degrees are made available to students who are unable or unwilling to attend public universities. Efforts are currently being made to pressure the government to develop a more liberal private universities

act based on models in the region. Bangladesh's Private Universities Act, 1992, (See Attachment 3) is instructive of how governments are making the shift from total monopoly to gradual acceptance of private sector involvement in post secondary education.

Finally, the literacy rate in Sri Lanka is quite high (88%) and primary and secondary school participation rates are also high. This basic education base has created a growing demand for quality post secondary education. But, the most important strength that the system has is a government that is committed to enhancing and expanding educational quality and services, and is interested in developing a system of higher education which is responsive to socio-economic demands.

## Chapter 3. USAID's STRATEGIC GOALS AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA

### 1.0. USAID/Sri Lanka's Strategic Goals and Objectives

The strategic vision of the USAID Mission in Sri Lanka places private initiative at the center of development. It focuses on expanding opportunities for all citizens on a sustainable basis. The Mission Goal is "A Greener" Democratic Newly Industrializing Country (NIC) with sustainable accelerated economic growth. There are three Subgoals: (1) an effective and dynamic market economy, (2) a healthy environment and productive natural resource base, and (3) an active pluralistic democracy.

In keeping with USAID priorities for the post-cold war period (Economic Growth, the Environment, Health and Population and Democracy) the Mission has identified four program objectives:

1. A sound investment climate and business performance
2. Diversification and commercialization of agricultural systems
3. Conservation and shared control of environmental and natural resources
4. Citizen participation in democratic systems.

Expected outcomes of the Mission's strategic objectives can be subsumed under three areas: (See Attachment 4).

#### A. Economic Growth

1. Reduced government control of productive resources
2. Improved technologies, more diverse products and markets
3. More accessible and efficient financial markets
4. Improved legal, regulatory & policy performance

### B. The Environment

1. Increased local management and shared control of Natural Resources
2. Increased public awareness and involvement in environmental issues.
3. Application of improved techniques and technologies by key "Actors."
4. Improved legal, regulatory and policy performance

### C. Democracy

1. A viable and effective NGO movement
2. Increased public awareness and participation
3. Established avenues of communication
4. Impacts of war and poverty mitigated

Inherent in these goals and objectives are a number of cross-cutting themes, including sustainability, productivity, investments, policy changes, and *education*. So, while neither basic or higher education are identified as Mission goals, sub-goals, strategic objectives, or outcomes, implicit in each of the stated objectives is some form of education. For example, both democracy and environmental objectives include increased public awareness and participation. Without some form of education, it would be difficult to achieve these objectives. Without some form of education, whether research or training, it would be impossible to produce the human capacity needed to ensure the development of diverse products and markets, regulations, policies and management tools for economic growth, empowerment and environmental control. The education might be applied, in-service, continuing, short-term or long term, but it is expected to take place, primarily at the post secondary level.

The fact that education is such an integral part of development programs, and USAID's post cold-war objectives, suggests that it is deserving of special attention. Whether the educational component is direct, i.e. separate and unique, or indirect, i.e. integrated into other components, depends on the approach of the Mission. However, at some point in the development of its programmatic

thrust, education must be addressed, preferably on the front end of the planning cycle.

## **2.0. A Review of USAID's Historical Involvement in Post Secondary Education in Sri Lanka**

A recent World Bank report on Education in Sri Lanka outlines the history, direction and outstanding needs of institutions of higher education in the country. This two volume work is quite detailed, yet at no point is USAID mentioned in the document. This absence indicates that in recent times, the Mission's focus on higher education has been indirect. The 1978 Project Grant Agreement for Agricultural Education Development (AED) is the only "education" project funded by the Mission in the past 15 years. The goal of AED was to strengthen faculty and curriculum in Agriculture. It supported agricultural research, faculty development through advanced training in the U.S. and/or in third countries, and assisted with new equipment and supplies for research laboratories and extension work.

During the same period, the Mission also supported faculty development through participant training programs in other disciplines, including Library Science, Economics, Humanities, Marine Affairs, Public Administration, Environmental Studies and Sociology. However, USAID/Sri Lanka has devoted the bulk of its educational expenditures to agricultural studies.

A summary of the AED project follows

**A. Consortium for Agricultural Education Development Project** (A.I.D. Project No. 383-0049) - (\$7.5 million dollar , 1979-1986) - Under a contract with the Academy for Educational Development - in consortium with The Pennsylvania State University, Texas A&M University and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, the project was designed to enhance Sri Lanka's ability to meet its increasing need for agricultural personnel with university training. It aimed at enabling the Post Graduate Institute of Agriculture to strengthen and expand

its undergraduate and graduate program with the objective of doubling the number of B.Sc. graduates and tripling the number of M.Sc. and Ph.D. graduates.

Project activities included training, technical assistance and procurement. Accomplishments in the three major areas of project services included:

1. Training: Academic training of 30 junior faculty members to the M. Sc. and Ph.D. level at U.S. consortium universities
2. Technical Assistance: Provision of 240.47 person-months of long and short term technical assistance in the form of visiting professors from consortium universities and other consultants
3. Procurement: A technical laboratory, audiovisual, and farm equipment and spare parts for equipment maintenance, books, journals, vehicles, and personal computers were procured under the project.

Approximately 90 participants received post secondary training in Agriculture. Subjects studied range from Farming Irrigation, Agronomy, Agricultural Research, Farm Management and Floriculture to Plant Pathology and Agricultural Economics. Data were not available on the exact degrees received, but Office of International Training (OIT) summaries of institutions attended indicated that both agricultural and non-agricultural studies were done at predominately white institutions in the mid-west and eastern portions of the U.S. Third country training was done in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.

In addition, despite the relative gender-balance in educational opportunities in Sri Lanka, there was a decided gender imbalance in USAID sponsored training. Of the 99 participants receiving USAID support, over 75% were male, only 18 were female. This might be reflective of a male dominated agricultural research/education sector, but given the predominance of women in agricultural production in Sri Lanka, it is surprising to see so few women being trained for professional positions in the sector.

On the whole, USAID/Sri Lanka has focused its educational budget on the agricultural sector and has provided support primarily for males at the post-graduate level.

### **3.0. Opportunities for Constructive Intervention in the Post Secondary Education Sector in Sri Lanka**

Within the context of USAID strategic objectives, the Mission should concentrate on cost effective opportunities for interventions to strengthen post secondary education in Sri Lanka. Broad categories of opportunities exist in the following areas :

- 3.1. **Curriculum Development:** Efforts to make the curriculum of post secondary institutions relevant to the social and economic needs of the nation should be encouraged and supported.
3. 2. **Educational Policy Research:** University and policy institute research on comparative educational systems, especially systems in the region, should be supported as a means of informing the educational policy dialogue and providing empirical data for policy, curriculum and structural reform.
- 3.3. **Policy Dialogue:** Informed public discussions organized by policy institutes in collaboration with NGOs would promote popular participation and encourage political leaders to address the problem of educational reform.
- 3.4. **Bridge Programs:** Policies and programs which bridge the gap between public education and private sector needs deserve serious attention from those who support economic growth.
- 3.5. **Conflict Resolution:** Mechanisms for conflict resolution, such as school counseling, should be established in pre-collegiate and post secondary institutions as a part of the cumulative socialization process undertaken by educational institutions.
3. 6. **University Linkages:** Focused and sustainable linkages between American and Sri Lankan post secondary institutions.

- 3.7. **International Exposure:** Study tours for government and educational officials to selected South-East Asian countries would provide first hand exposure to alternative post secondary policies and institutions.
- 3.8. **Exchanges:** Both student and faculty exchanges would enrich educational experience in Sri Lanka and contribute to faculty development and improved teaching in post secondary institutions. Emphases should be on bringing U.S. faculty to Sri Lanka to teach in areas where Sri Lanka has very limited or nonexistent capacity, e.g., physical education, electronic libraries, etc.
- 3.9. **Training:** Management training, training of trainers, short courses and post graduate degree programs should be encouraged and supported in selected disciplines such as environmental studies, business, public administration, and telecommunications.
- 3.10. **Small Enhancement Activities:** One time support for medical library acquisitions, a video series on rural women, etc.
- 3.11. **Infrastructure Upgrading** - A revolving fund for upgrading research materials, facilities, laboratories, equipment, etc. would be a cost effect way of assisting the government of Sri Lanka to strengthen the teaching and research capacity of post secondary institutions.
- 3.12. **Cost Recovery and Institutional Development:** Charging fees to students might cause political problems, but expert consultants, exchanges, and model programs might be useful to demonstrate how universities and research institutes can generate funds by a variety of means, including : (a) seeking private sector support for endowed chairs and support for infrastructure development; (b) seeking government and private sector contracts for policy studies, project evaluation, assessments, etc.; (c) promoting internships for undergraduates; and (d) reducing costs and duplication by expanding cooperation within the university system.

## Chapter 4: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1.0. Summary

Sri Lanka has established a number of quality institutions which have produced good programs and graduates who have made significant contributions to national development. However, the post secondary educational system lacks the capacity to respond to the recent demands resulting from government shifts towards democratization and privatization. In fact, the existing post secondary structure, especially the university system, is dysfunctional and ill-equipped to facilitate and promote macroeconomic market transition. (Notes)

The process of dismantling the protected public sector forces graduates into a competitive market unprepared or under-prepared for private sector challenges. When politicization of the educational system, decreasing budgetary allocations, increasing enrollments, insufficient support for faculty and infrastructure development converge, the quality of education declines. This leads to high unemployment among poorly prepared graduates, fractionalization of society, and the creation of a social environment which constrains, instead of encouraging, the type of educational reform needed to respond to long-term national development needs.

While it is accurate to note that the higher education sector in Sri Lanka faces political, structural, capacity and process constraints, perhaps, the most intractable of those constraints is political. Students and faculty in post secondary institutions are active participants in political parties. They do not always separate party politics from the academic enterprise. The process of selecting university leaders and hiring and firing university faculty is politicized, as is the matter of educational policy regarding costs for students, private universities, and new academic programs. As a result, universities are frequently closed, discipline, class attendance, and the quality of student work are declining and the political climate grows more foreboding. At some point, the entire

system breaks down. Post secondary institutions have neither the will or capacity to fix it.

Since educational institutions and systems reflect the larger society, it is important to understand the dependency of post secondary institutions on the state for direction and finances. However, it is equally important to understand that the relationship between education and the state is symbiotic. While education institutions might depend on the state for financial support, they are depended upon by the state to inculcate the values and provide the skills necessary to produce and reproduce the leadership of the state and industry. In carrying out their functions, post secondary institutions enjoy a great deal of autonomy. Universities have the liberty to revise courses and programs, with UGC approval. What is needed is a delinking of the political parties from post secondary institutions.

This need is clearly understood, however, the situation tends not to be viewed from the perspective of long term national (and personal) interests. Rather, the perspective is clouded by short-term vested interests. Perhaps because they themselves are products of the system, parties required to make the decisions for change have been unable and/or unwilling to bridge the gap between the identification of the problem and implementation of solutions.

One of the basic questions facing policy makers in Sri Lanka is this: should higher education be supply-driven? The issue of supply-side education must be tied to political, social, and fiscal policies, for in addition to the basic problem of a highly politicized educational system, there is need for curriculum reform, enhancement of facilities, budgetary needs, faculty development and long-term policies and strategies for the higher education sector. USAID/Sri Lanka can function as a conduit for interventions which complement the efforts of progressive segments of the higher education community and can encourage the development of an educational framework that is comprehensive and responsive to the social and economic needs of the nation.

In collaboration with other donors, USAID can support the development of indigenous capacity. Within the context of USAID's strategic goals and the development priorities of Sri Lanka, support for new forms of cooperation between the private and public sectors, rural and urban communities, in-school and adult populations, and linkages between U.S. institutions and universities in Sri Lanka would contribute to the realization of the Mission's vision of Sri Lanka as a democratic, environmentally sound newly industrializing country (NIC).

## **2.0. Recommendations**

Given the climate in Sri Lanka and the Mission's strategic objectives, concentration on the following activities is recommended. The recommendations are prioritized under each strategic objective.

### **2.1. Economic Growth**

\*2.1.1. Good administrative, and financial management skills would increase the capacity of the university to better manage its decreasing budgetary allocations. A program to train university officials to address the issues of cost recovery and institutional development would be extremely useful. Faculty exchanges where experts in institutional development come to Sri Lanka for 1-2 years and Sri Lankan officials spend 3-5 months working in institutional development offices at an American universities might be the most effective way to introduce these skills to post secondary institutions in Sri Lanka.

2.1.2. There is an acute shortage of qualified middle level managers. A management training program would provide the skills needed for a growing private sector and for policy makers and bureaucrats faced with management of a public sector beset by budgetary and political problems.

2.1.3. University programs in agri-business would enhance commercial agriculture and support rural growth. They would also build upon past USAID investments in agriculture, such as extensive support provided to the Post Graduate Institute for Agriculture through the AED project.

2.1.4. The establishment of linkages with U.S. universities is an effective way to provide needed exposure of post secondary faculties to trends and ideas in the international community, These linkages should focus simultaneously on exchanges for capacity building and exposure to alternative approaches to the educational enterprise.

2.1.5 Increased economic growth and efficiency could result from a bridge project between industry and the university which would enable students to participate in internships and practicums in the private sector.

2.1.6. A private business school, funded by the private sector, is being set up by the Chamber of Commerce to provide an Executive MBA program o new graduates and to employed professionals in the business sector. Support through retired U.S. executives and linkage programs with American institutions would go a long way towards producing the level of skills needed to make these programs successful.

2.1.7. A Curriculum Task Force composed of educators, government officials, private sector representatives and parents should be supported as a vehicle for creating a revised curriculum reflective of the contemporary role of education in national development. The Task Force would address critical questions of language and economic development, extending or modifying the period of higher education training to address practical and curriculum deficiencies, democratization of education, and educational expenditures, enrollment quotas, among others.

2.1.8. Academics, policy makers and the private sector would benefit from the promotion of a series of educational policy dialogues that are informed by serious research undertaken and disseminated by a local policy center.

2.1.9. Economic growth could result from strengthening continuing education programs for the professional and adults communities in Affiliated University Colleges. Correspondence courses, evening classes, extra-mural classes in rural areas, distance learning, workshops, and seminars are examples of programs which should be supported.

## **2.2. Environment and Natural Resource Management**

\*2.2.1. Universities are in the initial stages of developing interdisciplinary environmental studies programs, but they need assistance in training faculties to teach environmental courses. A Training of Trainers (TOT) project for university lecturers, in collaboration with NAREP, would enable them to develop the capacity to promote and sustain these fledging environmental initiatives.

2.2.2. As farmers, water bearers, wood gathers, and caretakers of the home and compound, rural women need technical knowledge of the natural resources (soil, water, forests, etc.) that they interact with on a daily basis. Distance learning and/or community-based awareness projects would enable rural women to make informed decisions about using and protecting the environment. This would have a multiplier effect in the home and in the village.

2.2.3. Faculty exchanges to help build curricula for environmental studies, and short term faculty training (TOT) in environment management would increase Sri Lanka's institutional capacity to manage natural resources.

2.2.4. There is interest in and benefits to be derived from sponsoring a series of seminars across the country on the relevance of environmental awareness to health and economic development.

## **2.3. Democracy and Governance**

\*2.3.1. According to one interviewee, derision and overpowering are the only available ways to resolve conflict in Sri Lankan culture. There is a clear opportunity to support mechanisms for conflict resolution. School counseling might be the least objectionable and the most cost effective way to promote the art of compromise that is vital to democratic governance. Linkages with U.S. institutions which have experience in conflict resolution and democratization could foster both strategies and build Sri Lankan institutional capacity for conflict resolution.

2.3.2. There is a vital need to review and revise educational policies and practices, including policies on private institutions. According to the World Bank, the aim of quality improvement is clear, but issues of affordability, revenue generation, and private sector involvement as possible means to this end are controversial and political. Support for comparative research on policies and practices in neighboring countries and in the U.S. would help shape a policy debate on the issues.

2.3.3. Continuing education is an effective way to forge links with community organizations and professional associations (bar associations, chartered accountants, etc.). Evening classes structured in a manner to encourage ongoing linkages and dialogue between the educational community, civil society and the private sector would contribute to democratization.

2.3.4. Dialogue on education, democracy and privatization should be promoted. Affiliated universities might become useful sites for promoting public debate.

2.3.5. There is continuing need for mediation between university and industry. Research institutes are well placed to bridge the gap and play the role of mediator. Programs which assist them in providing internships, training and practicums will bring the university closer to the productive sector and would demonstrate the importance of corporate participation in the democratic process as contribute to economic growth.

2.3.6. There are approximately 9,000 NGOs in Sri Lanka. Activities which bring the expertise of the university community to NGOs and promote meaningful collaboration between the entities would benefit both, and the nation.

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ATTACHMENTS

**Post Secondary Education in Sri Lanka**  
**Notes on visits with local resource persons**

After meeting with local resource persons to inform about the objectives of the Post Secondary Education needs assessment team, the following preliminary observations were made:

- a. The existing post-secondary education institutional structure, especially the university system, is ill-equipped and dysfunctional to facilitate and promote the macroeconomic market transition.
- b. Historically, the local University graduates have been employed as civil servants, mainly as educators, which is still considered a position of stature and privilege. However, with the rationalizing of the government sector, the traditional bureaucratic, nationalistic (Sinhala biased), university structure is faced with the dilemma of producing graduates that are productive and beneficial for the growing private sector.
- c. With a long history of nationalized education system, there is a strong political opposition to a "privatized" system.
- d. A private sector education administrator indicated that his institution can provide the same, possibly a better, education to students at a lower price than the cost incurred by the central government in providing "free" higher education.
- e. Although a graduate placement scheme was recently implemented, a majority of the graduates left the private sector for lower paying positions in the public sector.
- f. The private sector estimates that there is significant lack graduates produced by tertiary education system that is employable at middle level managerial positions.
- g. Although there is some local initiative for establishing a post-graduate MBA School, there are opposing forces that suggest expanding and enhancing the capabilities of existing institutions.
- h. On the area of linkages, one private sector commentator suggested providing some capable technical assistance to design some local business case studies for education purposes.
- i. In order to increase the social relevance of public sector education, suggestion was made to promote some study tours for high officials to selected South-East Asian countries (Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia).

## POST SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSESSMENT

Purpose of visit:

The assessment will determine how host country post-secondary education and research institutions can be strengthened to achieve USAID's strategic objectives and host country sustainable development objectives.

Team members:

Dr. Shelby Lewis, Associate Vice President for Internationalization at Clark Atlanta University  
Dr. Valerie Smith, Visiting University Scientist

Tentative Schedule

Arrival : Lewis, May 14th, 11.59 PM, UL423C  
Smith, May 15th, 9.30 AM, EM 76Y

	Mon, May 16th	Tue, May 17th	Wed, May 18th	Thur, May 19th	Fri, May 20th
	Review : Background 9:00 Mission Briefing: USIS	9:30 - 10:30 Mr. Chandi Chanmugam, Dr. Saman Kalegama Dr. Shelton Wanasinghe, Dr. Nimal Sanderathne IPS (Institute for Policy Studies)	9:00 - 10:00 Mr. E.M.S Edirisinghe ITS	World Bank	Report Writing
	11:00 NAREP	11:00 - 12:00 Dr. P.M. Jayatissa, Director (Chief Executive), Ceylon Institute of Scientific & Industrial Research	11:00 Prof. G.L. Pieris, ex-Vice Chancellor, University of Colombo,		Wrap-up discussion with Mission director and staff.
	<b>B R E A K</b>				
	1:00 - Mr. Asoka Senanayake Dir. Gen. National Inst. for Business Management, (NIBM) w/ Maxi Prelis	1:30 - 2:30 Dr. Gunapala Nanayakkara, Director, Postgraduate Institute of Management,	2:00 Mr. S.A. Karunarthne Department of National Planning	Report Writing	
		3:00 Dr. Godfrey Gunatillake MARGA		4:00 Mr. M.D.D Pieris Ministry of Higher Education & Uni. Grants Commission	

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Ceylon Chamber of Commerce

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Prof. H. P. M. Gunasena  
Dean - Faculty of Agriculture  
University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya

Prof. Y. D. S. Senanayake, Director  
Post Graduate Institute of Agriculture

Dr. Madduma-Bandara, U of Peradeniya  
Center for Environmental Studies

Edtable.jb

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## MISSION GOAL, A.I.D. POLICY AREAS, STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES &amp; INDICATORS

MISSION GOAL	A.I.D. POLICY AREAS & MISSION STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	PROGRAM OUTCOMES	PROJECT
A "Greener" Democratic NIC with sustainable accelerated economic growth	<b>A. ECONOMIC GROWTH</b> 1. Increased competitiveness & growth of markets & enterprises  1. Total value of non-traditional exports 2. Amount of foreign investment approved 3. Total value of other agricultural production	1. Reduced government control of productive resources	PSPS MED MARD PL 480 PPI
		1. % & value of targeted government assets & investments transferred to LT private control	
		2. Improved technologies, more diverse products & markets	DARP TIPS
		1. Value of investments in new technologies by targeted firms	AGENT MED MARD ACDI
		3. More accessible and efficient financial markets	HIG
		1. Value of tradeable private equity and debt	PSPS
		4. Improved legal, regulatory & policy performance	PL 480 APAP DARP
		1. # of public agencies restructured to respond to private sector needs	
		1. Increased local management & shared control of Natural Resources	NAREP SCOR MARD ISM
		1. # & % of targeted area covered by agreements between the GSL & local user groups	
	<b>B. ENVIRONMENT</b> 2. Improved practices for sustained productivity of Natural Resources  1. # of hectares & % of targeted land with improved conservation techniques 2. % of new investments which are subject to EIA requirements that have substantially complied with EIA recommendations	2. Increased public awareness & involvement in environmental issues	CIPART NAREP
		1. % general public involved in environmental issues	
		3. Application of improved techniques & technologies by key "Actors"	SCOR MARD
		1. % of targeted farm households using improved environmental techniques	
		4. Improved legal, regulatory & policy performance	NAREP CIPART
		1. # of selected actions supporting implementation of the national environmental action plan	
		1. A viable & effective NGO movement	PVO CIPART NAREP
		1. % of selected NGOs (promulgating and) following recognized standards of performance and accountability	
		2. Increased public awareness and participation	NAREP CIPART
		1. % of surveyed citizens involved in solutions to selected development issues	
	<b>C. DEMOCRACY</b> 3. Greater empowerment of broad range of citizens, to participate in development  1. # of targeted public-policy decisions influenced by organized citizen input	3. Established avenues of communication	CIPART NAREP
		1. # of active committees set up with membership from selected government agencies and NGOs	
		4. Impacts of war and poverty mitigated	MED MARD PVO PL 480 CIPART RAP
		1. # of targeted households achieving incomes above poverty level	
		2. # of targeted displaced persons with access to income generating activities	

TOTAL INDICATORS

6

13

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Registered No D A-S

BANGLADESH



GAZETTE

Extra Ordinary Number  
Published by Authority

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Sunday, August 9, 1992

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Bangladesh National Assembly

Dhaka 9th August, 1992/25th Sraban, 1399

The following Act which was adopted by the National Assembly and has received the assent of the President on the 9th August, 1992 (25th Sraban B.S. 1399) and this law is hereby being published for general information.

Act No : XXXIV of 1992

Whereas it is necessary to set up universities at the Private level to meet the growing demand for higher education in the country and its for wide dissemination, to make available higher education to the general public and to create skilled manpower through it the Act is made to regulate establishment of Private Universities;

And whereas certain public welfare oriented persons, assemblage of persons, charitable trusts and institutions of the country are desirous of setting up and administering university at the private level;

And whereas it is necessary and expedient to make provision for setting up of university at the private level;

Therefore the following act is hereby made :-

1. Short title : This Act may be called the Private University Act, 1992.
2. Definition : In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context,
  - (a) "Faculty" means academic faculty of a private university;
  - (b) "Academic Council" means academic council of a private university;
  - (c) "Authority" means authority referred to or constituted under this Act;
  - (d) "Trustee Board" means trustee board referred to in section 14(1);
  - (e) "Governing Body" means Governing Body referred to in section 14(1) ;
  - (f) "Founder" means any person, assemblage of persons, charitable trust or any other institution who has or have set up any private university;
  - (g) "Private University" means any private university established under this Act;
  - (h) "A group of persons" means an assembled body or group assemblance comprising two on more persons for the purpose of establishment of any private university;
  - (i) "Grants Commission" means the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh established by the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh Order, 1973 (P.O. No 10 of 1973);
  - (j) "Regency Council" means any regency council referred to in section 14(1);

- (k) "Charter" means any charter given under section 6 for setting up any private university;
- (l) "Syndicate" means syndicate referred to in section 14(1).

3. Private University :

- (1) One or more private universities may be established under the provisions of this Act.
- (2) Subject to the provisions of this Act, any private university will have the right to acquire, both moveable and immovable properties, possess them and transfer them and will sue and be sued by its own name.

4. The Establishment of Private University : With the permission of the Government and subject to provisions of this Act a private university can be established any where in Bangladesh : Provided that with the prior approval of the Government, a Private University can initially be established temporarily anywhere within five years but from the date of its temporary establishment it must relocate permanently on its own land measuring not less than five acres and with sufficient infrastructures as approved by the Government.

5. The University is open to all irrespective of caste and creed : The Private University shall remain open to male and female members of any nation, religion, caste, tribe or class.

6. Charter for establishment of Private University :

- (1) No Private University can be established or operated without a charter obtained from the government.
- (2) Any person or a body of individuals, charitable trust or any other institution desirous of obtaining a charter under sub-section (1) for the purpose of setting up and operating any Private University will have to apply to the Government in the prescribed form.
- (3) On receipt of an application under sub-Section (2) the Government may ask for further information from the applicant for consideration of the matter and if the Government is satisfied after consideration of the application that the applicant has fulfilled the conditions of Section 7 for establishment of a private university then it will issue a charter under sub-section (1) in favour of the applicant in the form prescribed by the Rules framed under section 21.
- (4) If the government is satisfied that the applicant has failed to fulfill the conditions of Section 7 for establishment of a Private University then the Government may by an order reject the application submitted by the applicant under sub-section (2).

Provided that no such application shall be rejected without a reasonable opportunity of hearing being given to the applicant.

- (5) The person, assemblage of persons, charitable trust or institution aggrieved by the order rejecting the application under sub-section (4) may within thirty days of the order appeal against the order to the chancellor and the decision of the chancellor on the appeal shall be deemed to be final.

7. Condition for the procurement of the Charter : To obtain the charter under section 6 a Private University, inter alia, will have to meet the following conditions, viz :-
- (a) A plan of its curriculum must have the prior approval of the University Grants Commission;
  - (b) It must have at least two faculties at the initial stage;
  - (c) Each faculty must have a minimum number of teachers possessing the requisite exceptional educational qualification as prescribed by the Grant Commission;
  - (d) It must have a Reserve Fund of at least Taka one core in any nationalized bank.
  - (e) It must have a balanced intensive curricula and syllabus, approved by the Grants Commission;
  - (f) It must keep reserved five percent of its total admissible seats for admission of the poor but meritorious students who shall be entitled to exemption of tuition fees.
  - (g) The pay scale of the teachers and the amount of tuition fees to be paid by the students should be mentioned specifically.
8. Officers of the Private University : (i) A Private University should have the following officers viz,
- (a) Chancellor
  - (b) Vice-Chancellor, Rector or Principal
  - (c) Treasurer
  - (d) Registrar
  - (e) Dean
  - (f) Department Head
  - (g) Controller of Examinations.
9. Chancellor :
- (i) The President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh will remain the Chancellor of all the private universities and he or any person authorized by him will preside over the convocation ceremony for awarding academic degrees and honorary degrees.
  - (ii) Any offer containing award of honorary degree must have the consent of the Chancellor.
  - (iii) The convocation ceremony will be held each year with the permission of the Chancellor or at such intervals of time as will be determined by the Chancellor by his order.
10. Vice-Chancellor, etc:
- (1) The Vice-Chancellor, Rector or Principals of any private university will be appointed by the Chancellor at the recommendation of the Founder for a period of four years on such terms as will be fixed by the Chancellor and he will be the Chief Executive of that University.
  - (2) The Treasurer will discharge the duties of the office of the Vice-Chancellor, Rector or Principal for such periods when the Vice-Chancellor, Rector or Principal will be incapacitated to perform the duties of his office due to leave, illness on any other reason.

11. Treasurer :

- (i) The Chancellor will appoint the Treasurer at the recommendation of the founder for a period of four years on such terms as the Chancellor shall determine.
- (ii) The Treasurer shall be responsible for the accounts of a Private University.

12. Appointment of Registrar, Dean etc. :

- (i) The Registrar, the Departmental Heads and the Controller of Examinations shall be appointed by the Syndicate, Board of Governors, Regency Council or the trustee board as it may be, on such terms as by the Chancellor shall determine.
- (ii) The Dean of any faculty shall be elected by the Heads of Departments under the concerned faculty for a term determined by the Chancellor at the recommendation of the founder.

13. Appointment of other officers : In case any other officer is required to be appointed in addition to those referred to section 8 above, the founder will have to take prior permission of the Government for appointing any such officer, and if the permission is not obtained within thirty days from the date of application for the permission, an appeal shall lie to the Chancellor within thirty days thereafter and if the Chancellor does not dispose of the appeal within sixty days from the date of receipt of the appeal, it will be deemed to have been allowed.

14. Authority of the Private University :

- (1) Any Private University will have the following authorities, viz :-
  - (a) A Syndicate, Board of Governors, Regency Council or Trustee Board, comprising not less than nine members;
  - (b) An Academic Council comprising not less than nine members;
  - (c) Faculty or School of Studies;
  - (d) Curriculum Committee;
  - (e) Finance Committee comprising not less than five members;
  - (f) Election Committee comprising not less than five members.
- (2) The founder may, with the prior approval of the Chancellor constitute any other authority as he may deem necessary, in addition to those referred to in sub-section (1) of this section, to conduct the affairs of the private university more smoothly and efficiently.
- (3) The Syndicate, Board of Governors, Regency Council or Trustee Board shall be constituted with such persons who have long experience in the field of education, culture, industry, science, technology or administration.

15. Curriculum, etc :

- (1) The plan in regard to the plan of educational programs, curriculum, syllabus and the standard of the education of any Private University shall have to be approved by the Grants Commission.
- (2) For approval as required under sub-section (1), an application shall have to be made to the Grants Commission, which shall give its decision within sixty days from the date of receipt of the application.
- (3) If the Grants Commission does not accord approval of the plan as sought under sub-section (2) of this section, any Private University may appeal against the order of refusal to the Chancellor, within thirty days from the date of receipt of such order, and Chancellor's decision up on the appeal shall be deemed to be final.
- (4) If the Chancellor fails to dispose of the appeal within sixty days from the date of receipt of the appeal then it will be deemed that the appeal has been allowed.

16. Cancellation of Charter :

- (1) In case of receipt of complaint as to fraud or cheating in awarding certificates or failure to maintain the standard of education as its is approved for that university under section 15, the Chancellor may inquire into the complaint by appointing a sitting or retired Judge of the Supreme Court and if the charge is sustained in the said inquiry the government may revoke the charter of that university .

Provided that the charter of the Private University cannot be abrogated under this sub-section unless a reasonable opportunity of hearing has been given to the founder.

- (2) Any person, assemblage of persons, charitable trust or institutions aggrieved by the order given under sub-section (1) of this section may appeal to the Chancellor against such order, within thirty days from the date of such order and the decision of the Chancellor upon the appeal shall be final.
- (3) The appeal under sub-section (2) of this section shall have to be disposed of within sixty days from the date of receipt of the appeal and if not done so, the appeal shall be deemed to have been allowed.

17. Statutes :

- (1) The Syndicate, the Board of Governors, the Regency Council or the Trustee Board, with the approval of the Chancellor, will formulate statutes containing provisions relating to the Syllabus, Curriculum, Study schedule, and for the performance of administrative and other necessary functions of any Private University.
- (2) The Statutes formulated under sub-section (1) of this section shall come into effect from the date of its publication in the Government Gazettee.

18. Certificate, Diploma etc. of Private University :

All the educational certificate, degree and diploma of any Private University shall be signed by the Vice-Chancellor, Rector or by the Principal as it may be and they must bear the seal of that university.

19. Fund :

- (1) The Private University must have a fund ;
- (2) This fund, with the approval of the Syndicate, Board of Governors, Regency Council or, Trustee board as it may be must be deposited with any nationalized bank in the name of that university and money may be withdrawn from the fund in the manner prescribed by the rule.
- (3) No Private University or any person or organization on behalf of it shall raise any fund from within or out side the country, without knowledge or prior approval of the Chancellor.

20. Maintenance of Accounts and Audit :

The income-expenditure accounts of any Private University shall be maintained in the form specified by the Grants Commission and the said accounts shall be audited by any chartered Accountant appointed with the approval of the Chancellor, in every financial year.

21. Authority to frame rules :

To implement the objectives this Act, the Government shall make rules, by government gazettee notification.

Abul Hashem  
Secretary

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**SRI LANKA POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSESSMENT**  
**Briefing Session for USAID/Sri Lanka**  
**May 20, 1994**

## **1.1. CONTEXT**

Educational systems are instruments of the state. They are designed to inculcate youth with sanctioned values and provide them with appropriate knowledge and skills for perpetuating the social order. Educational systems in developing countries were originally designed to serve the interests of the colonial state, and were only minimally modified during the post-colonial period.

Post-Secondary education in Sri Lanka has provided the state with sufficient numbers of quality institutions and graduates to make the goal of sustainable economic development achievable within the next quarter century. Yet, evidence suggests that current perceptions of the direct link between education and development are not clear. This opaque vision is exacerbated by the demands being made on post-secondary institutions in response to a governmental shift to privatization. The process of dismantling the protected public sector forces graduates into a competitive market unprepared or under prepared for private sector employment. The dilemma of curriculum relevance linked to unemployability poses a serious challenge to post-secondary institutions. In order to meet that challenge, it might be necessary to transform the structure and philosophy of the higher education system.

This assessment seeks to identify those factors which enhance and those which inhibit the transformation of post-secondary institutions in Sri Lanka, and to determine how these institutions can be strengthened to achieve sustainable national development, within the context of USAID's strategic objectives

## **2.0. POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA**

### **2.1 Strengths**

2.1.1. A diversified and comprehensive post-secondary institutional system has been designed to meet the basic, advanced, technical, vocational, professional, and continuing education needs of the nation.

2.1.2. Policies and procedures are in place to address questions of equity with respect to gender and rural, educationally disadvantaged populations.

2.1.3. Affiliated University Colleges and an Open University have been established to meet regional and some of the non-traditional demands of the post-secondary population.

2.1.5. Research, private, and post-graduate institutes have been established in response to social and economic demands.

2.1.6. Outreach activities, agricultural extension, and continuing education programs are being established to address the educational needs of the adult, employed population.

2.1.7. A strong enabling scientific and technological environment has evolved, especially in the areas of agricultural, medicine, and computer technology.

2.1.8. There is growing awareness and debate about curriculum relevance and the responsibility of post-secondary education to national development. Both educators and policy makers are exploring options for transforming the curriculum.

2.1.9. There is increasing communication between the universities and the government, and between universities and research institutes in selected disciplines, particularly agriculture and environmental studies.

\*2.1.10. There are a number of existing linkages between universities in Sri Lanka and universities in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Thailand and India.

\*2.1.11. There is gender equity in access to education.

## **2.2. Constraints**

2.2.1. The structure, philosophy and curriculum of the (public) post-secondary education system in Sri Lanka are no longer relevant to national development priorities. The system does not prepare students for employability or for making significant contributions to national development.

2.2.2 The responsibility and accountability of post-secondary institutions to the wider community and to national development are still unclear, and there is no ongoing serious policy dialogue about integrated national, regional and sectoral planning and programs for educational change.

2.2.3. There is a perception of post-secondary education as a way of fostering class and regional interests.

2.2.4. There is a rural/urban dichotomy as regards access to and quality of preparation for post-secondary education.

2.2.5. Due in part to political, social, and fiscal policies, qualified educators are being lost to industry, foreign nations, politics, and/or dysfunctional bottlenecks in post-secondary institutions, i.e., there is a brain drain in Sri Lanka.

2.2.6. Unsustainable patterns of educational expenditures have resulted from inadequate enrollment management and the absence of a long term cost recovery system.

2.2.7. There is some concern about the breadth of vision both government and university officials and the absence of well researched data on approaches and successes in educational transformation in other Asian states.

2.2.8 Post-secondary institutions often nurture unsupportative attitudes towards the private sector as the engine of economic growth.

2.2.9. There is tension between the need to democratize the university to meet the needs of the economy and traditional elitist social and educational values. The political ramifications of the "free vs. private" debate presents a major obstacle to meeting the human resource demands of the nation.

2.2.9. Funding is a major factor in the ability of educational institutions to develop creative and appropriate approaches to human resource development.

2.2.10. There is considerable resistance to educational change among politicians and post-secondary academics.

2.2.11. Inadequate communication skills limit the employability of many university graduates.

2.2.12. Major political constraints prevent the system from addressing the question of English as a medium of instruction at the undergraduate level.

\*2.2.13. There seems to be a pervasive view that, despite the fact there are only eight universities which meet the needs of less than half of the eligible (and interested) students each year, there is no need for additional universities.

### **3.0. OPPORTUNITIES**

Within the context of USAID strategic objectives, the following opportunities exist for cost effective interventions to strengthen post-secondary education in Sri Lanka:

#### **3.1. Economic Growth**

3.1.1. Economic growth could result from strengthening continuing education programs for the professional and adults communities in Affiliated University Colleges. Correspondence courses, evening classes, extra-mural classes in rural areas, distance learning, workshops, and seminars are examples of such programs.

3.1.2. Academics, policy makers and the private sector would benefit from the promotion of a series of educational policy dialogues informed by serious research undertaken and disseminated by a local policy center.

3.3.3. The establishment of linkages with U.S. universities is an effective way to provide needed exposure of post-secondary faculties to trends and ideas in the international community. These linkages should focus simultaneously on exchanges for capacity building and exposure to alternative approaches to the educational enterprise.

3.1.4. Increased economic growth and efficiency could result from a bridge project enabling students to participate in internships and practicums in industry. The project would be a bridge between the university and industry.

3.1.5. A management training program for University administrators would provide them with the vision, administrative, and financial management skills to increase the capacity of the university to contribute to national development.

3.1.6. A Curriculum Task Force composed of educators, Ministry officials, private sector representatives and parents should be supported as a vehicle for creating a revised curriculum reflective of the contemporary role of education in national development. The Task Force would address critical questions of language and economic development, extending or modifying the period of higher education training to address practical and curriculum deficiencies, democratization of education, and educational expenditures, enrollment quotas, among others.

### **3.2. Environment and Natural Resource Management**

3.2.1. There is interest in and benefits to be derived from sponsoring a series of seminars across the country on the relevance of environmental awareness to health and economic development.

3.2.2. Universities are in the initial stages of developing interdisciplinary environmental studies programs, but they need assistance in training faculties to teach environmental courses. A Training of Trainers (TOT) project for university lectures, in collaboration with NAREP, would enable them to develop the capacity to promote and sustain these fledgling environmental initiatives.

3.2.3. Expansion of agricultural research facilities, equipment and opportunities through capital investments and participant training would build capacity for better management of natural resources.

3.2.4. As farmers, water bearers, wood gatherers, and caretakers of the home and compound, rural women need technical knowledge of the natural resources (soil, water, forests, etc.) that they interact with on a daily basis. Distance learning and/or

community-based awareness projects would enable rural women to make informed decisions about using and protecting the environment. This would have a multiplier effect in the home and in the village.

### **3.3. Democracy and Governance**

3.3.1. As role models and case studies for lessons in political and community participation for rural women, a video and print series should be developed on selected female professionals and political activists.

3.3.2. Fora outside Colombo should be established to promote dialogue on education, democracy and privatization. The continuing education unit of the university, indigenous NGOs, or community based organizations might be central in the development of these fora.

3.3.3. The link between democratic governance and freedom of the press should be explored and promoted through a democratization project with brings journalists and policy makers together in universities and schools, especially in rural areas.

3.3.4. There is continuing need for mediation between university and industry. Research institutes are well placed to bridge the gap and play the role of mediator. Programs which assist them in providing internships, training and practicums for bringing the university closer to the productive sector would demonstrate the importance of corporate participation in the democratic process.

### **4.0. SUMMARY**

Ongoing efforts to respond to the demands made on the educational system as a result of political and economic changes provide a unique opportunity to rethink and transform the philosophy, structure and content of higher education in Sri Lanka. USAID/Sri Lanka can function as a conduit for interventions which complement the efforts of progressive segments of the higher education community and can encourage the development of an educational framework that is comprehensive and responsive to the social and economic needs of the nation.

Within the context of USAID's strategic goals and the development priorities of Sri Lanka, support for new forms of cooperation between the private and public sectors, rural and urban communities, in-school and adult populations, and linkages between U.S. institutions and universities in Sri Lanka would promote the realization of the vision of Sri Lanka as a democratic, environmentally sound newly industrializing country (NIC).

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\* These points were included during the oral presentation.